

By STUART EARP Witney Town 0, Wycombe Wanderers 6

BEFORE Wycombe Wanderers' supporters start celebrating Christmas early after looking at the above scoreline, let me tell them a few 'home truths' about Tuesday's visit to Witney Town in the Shaw and Kilburn Floodlight League.

Although it might look as though the Blues have at last solved their perennial problem of scoring goals, they were up against a side that contained only two first team regulars from the Southern League Division One North club.

The side put out by Witney possessed no fewer than eight teenagers while Wanderers had nine of their first choice team out.

The result was inevitable. Wanderers dominated from start to finish and things got so bad in the second half, John Maskell could easily have gone off for an early shower. He was called upon just once to make anything resembling a save.

Blues' manager John Reardon was understandably disappointed with the opposition as Witney provided Wycombe with little more than shooting practice. The youngsters were completely out of their depth but should be congratulated for keeping going against impossible odds.

Wycombe at least showed the right attitude and took the game seriously when they had reason to make it a fiasco. But without being too Scrooge-like, they should have had 16 goals rather than six.

It is no exaggeration to report that Wanderers must have had something like 20 or more chances to score goals but only six were converted. Town goalkeeper Graham Harding had a lot to do with that as he produced half a dozen brilliant saves but there were several times when he was the only man left to beat.

Chief offenders of the early Christmas spirit were Mick Holifield, Paul Birdseye and Howard Kennedy while even Tony Horseman wasted two or three excellent chances. In a way it was symptomatic of Wycombe's major bugbear this season.

OUTCLASSED

From the start Witney looked hopelessly outclassed. Horseman, Holifield, Farouk Quraishi and John Priestley all went close while at the other end Nigel Montague miscued a volley when Richard Strong

headed across his own goal. Graham Mackenzie netted after 13 minutes but was off-side.

The pace of Holifield was a constant thorn in the flesh of Witney, especially right back Lyle Bowmaker, and with Wycombe feeding him precise passes through the defence, a goal was inevitable sooner or later. It came after 16 minutes when Quraishi threaded the ball through for Mick to race on and slam a drive into the net.

Horseman netted the second after 26 minutes when he robbed Paul Souch, saw the goalkeeper coming out and then lofted the ball over him and into the net for the cheekiest of goals. Alan Phillips replaced Priestley in the first half after John was kicked by Quraishi during a scramble — he was not



HOWARD KENNEDY
... two goals

amused. Before he went off Priestley was actually robbed of the ball by Kennedy when about to shoot, such was Wycombe's dominance they were almost lining up for pot shots.

The second half was even worse than the first. The times Witney managed to cross the half-way line could be counted on the fingers of one hand as Wycombe powered forward at will.

Mackenzie made it 3-0 after 52 minutes when Phillips found Quraishi and Farouk's cross completely bemused the home defence. Holifield and Quraishi both should have scored in the next two minutes while Harding robbed Horseman with a brilliant save.

There were times when it seemed easier to score than miss when first Holifield broke clean through and then Kennedy allowed the ball to roll under his foot just four yards from the goalline. Eventually Kennedy did find the net for the fourth goal after Keith Mead, who switched to right back and dubbed himself the new George Cohen, drove the ball hard and low across goal.

Phillips and Kennedy combined to lay on the fifth goal in the 75th minute for Horseman and three minutes later Kennedy bagged his second after Harding had blocked his first effort. Maskell had his one save to make from Darryl Hirons soon afterwards and for the rest of the match contented himself with a few choice comments in a rich Oxfordshire accent.

Wanderers contented themselves with corner practice after that (they had 14 in the match while Witney failed to win a single flag kick) but further fine saves from Harding kept them at bay.

WITNEY: G. Harding, L. Bowmaker, G. Austin, A. Jeffries, P. Souch, M. Roper, N. Montague, P. Bryant (sub N. Hunt 45 mins), A. Bryant, D. Hirons, A. Elger, Sub S. Kaluzo (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, K. Mead, R. Strong, S. Vass, G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley (sub A. Phillips 39 mins), F. Quraishi, H. Kennedy, A. Horseman, M. Holifield.

Halftime: 2-0. Goalscorers: Horseman 2 (26, 72), Kennedy 2 (63, 78), Holifield (16), Mackenzie (52).

WYCOMBE Wanderers begin a lengthy Christmas break this week which lasts until December 31 when they travel to local rivals Slough Town for an Isthmian League game.

The following week, the Blues are again away, this time at Tooting in the league and on January 14 they make the long trip to Bridgend in the first round of the FA Trophy. On January 21 they are away yet again, paying another visit to Slough in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup.

Their next home game in the Isthmian League is on January 28 when they entertain Hitchin at Loakes Park.

Wycombe's youth team, represented by Flackwell Heath, have jumped up to fifth place in section A of the Berger Paints Isthmian Youth Cup after a series of excellent results. If they continue their form they will challenge strongly to become one of the three clubs in this section to qualify for the finals.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

(up to and including 18/12/77)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	24	19	4	1	57	16	61
Wycombe	24	15	2	7	41	25	47
Leatherhead	24	13	6	5	44	22	45
Hitchin	24	13	6	5	42	27	45
Tooting	25	12	7	6	37	28	43
Dagenham	26	12	5	9	47	39	41
Croydon	24	11	5	8	38	33	38
Staines	24	10	7	7	30	33	37
Carshalton	24	10	8	6	40	34	36
Hendon	27	10	6	11	36	37	36
Hayes	25	10	6	9	30	32	36
Sutton	23	10	5	8	29	32	35
Barking	23	9	2	12	36	38	29
Slough	24	8	4	12	33	41	28
Walthamstow	20	7	6	7	29	31	27
Boreham	19	7	4	8	25	31	25
Woking	21	6	2	13	33	40	20
Southall	23	4	8	11	23	41	20
Leytonstone	25	3	10	12	27	42	19
Tilbury	20	4	6	10	27	36	18
Kingstonian	23	4	5	14	22	36	17
Stortford	24	2	6	16	22	54	12

BERGER PAINTS YOUTH CUP

SECTION 'A'

(up to 15/12/77)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slough	10	6	1	3	22	10	19
Southall	9	5	3	1	20	13	18
Hendon	10	5	1	4	27	14	16
St Albans	9	4	3	2	19	14	15
Wycombe	9	4	1	4	22	20	13
Maidenhead	9	2	5	2	15	22	11
Wokingham	10	1	3	6	11	25	6
Wembley	10	1	3	6	9	27	6